

The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

21 March 1988

National Intelligence Council

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Crisis Management Working Group

FROM: Charles E. Allen
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

SUBJECT: Comments on Proposed Crisis Management Working Group Plan

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1. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on proposed CMWG objectives and courses of action during the next ten months.

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2. As we delve into tasks during this relatively brief period, recommend we concentrate on those that can be most readily accomplished, focusing on procedural enhancements to extant systems and developing the architecture for future capabilities. Specifically, the Secure Voice Teleconferencing System (SVTS) is emerging as the centerpiece for a new way to do business. SVTS probably will soon offer the convenience, reliability and security long missing in any one system.

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3. I recommend we take full advantage of the capabilities inherent in SVTS. To do so will require its use routinely, not just during periods of high national tension. Accordingly, your concept of integrating current operations with crisis management is key, because the intelligence community deals with crisis in one form or another during 24-hour-a-day operations.

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4. Most policy decisions, both those dealing with crisis and those involving more routine matters, start with consultations among analysts and desk officers, move on to reviews by more senior managers, and conclude with decisions at the PRG level and higher. SVTS could be used at all these levels.

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5. Advantages with multi-level usage are many and offer the potential for more complete staff work leading to more timely, better informed decisions. To achieve this goal, the system must be made more available and accessible to analysts and desk officers at various agencies. Another plus to such an arrangement would be that key people at all levels would understand how the system can be used effectively at those rare, but real, moments of crisis.

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6. Establishing regular meetings using SVTS would be one way to test the system's strengths and to rectify shortcomings. In addition, DCA should be given a permanent charter to oversee technical aspects and configuration control of necessary changes brought about by technological evolution and lessons-learned during system usage. [redacted]

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7. I am planning for the next ten months to also be a period for consolidating our strategy for upgrading NOIWON capabilities. Shortly I will be sending you a written proposal that will be consistent with the overall objectives of the CMWG work plan. [redacted]

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8. [redacted] and I stand ready to support the goals of the CMWG and to assist in implementing changes developed during the course of CMWG deliberations. [redacted]

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Charles E. Allen